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LETTER DATED 12 JULY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith a communication from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Ali Alatas, addressed to the Secretary-General, concerning reports on a series of incidents that have recently taken place in East Timor (see annex).

It will be greatly appreciated if you could have the aforementioned communication circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Makarim WIBISONO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 9 July 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia addressed to the Secretary-General

As directed by President B. J. Habibie, I should like to invite your attention to reports on a series of incidents in East Timor that have recently aroused the concern of the international community. Unfortunately, these reports have not always adhered to strict standards of objectivity and impartiality, with the result that they have not been totally accurate.

I am therefore constrained to set the record straight and to take the liberty of sharing with you the actual facts about the incidents that took place in three places in East Timor recently, namely in Maliana, on 29 June 1999, in Viqueque, on 30 June 1999, and in Liquica, on 3 and 4 July 1999.

Concerning the incident in Maliana, the facts are as follows:

(a) The incident began when an anti-integration group hurled insults at a pro-integration group outside the compound of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). The unfurling of banners bearing political slogans by the anti-integration group heightened the tension and led to a stone-throwing skirmish between the two groups;

(b) The melee spilled into the UNAMET office when anti-integrationists entered the compound to take cover in the UNAMET premises. This unfortunately led to the building being hit by the stone throwers from outside;

(c) The police arrived a few minutes later, dispersed the angry group outside the UNAMET compound and seized control of the situation. By then, the office had been damaged and one (1) UNAMET official and seven (7) East Timorese had suffered injuries;

(d) The Government of Indonesia has expressed its sincere regrets about the incident and pledged to bring to justice those responsible for the incident. It must be pointed out, however, that this deplorable incident would not have happened if the gates to the UNAMET building had not been opened so that the anti-integrationists could take cover in the premises. It is also clear that UNAMET was the unintended victim rather than the intended target of the stone throwing from outside.

The facts regarding the incident at Viqueque are as follows:

(a) On 30 June 1999, at around 10:30 a.m. local time, dozens of pro-integrationists staged a demonstration in front of the UNAMET office demanding that UNAMET locate the body of Duarte Guteres, a member of the pro-integration faction who had been killed on 29 June 1999 in Waimuri village. The demonstrators sent an ultimatum to UNAMET, which stated that, if the latter failed to locate the body of Guteres by 2 p.m. of 30 June 1999, they would expel UNAMET from Viqueque. They also demanded that UNAMET be neutral in carrying out its mandate. In the afternoon, the group marched from in front of the UNAMET

office, where they had been demonstrating, into the streets of the town shouting demands for the dissolution of UNAMET. The group began to disperse when they reached the residence of the Regent;

(b) The pro-integrationist demonstrators were definitely wrong and unreasonable in their demands to UNAMET, but this was provoked by a perception that UNAMET was partial to the anti-integrationists. For, when an anti-integrationist had been killed a few days earlier in Beobe village, UNAMET had gone to great lengths and trouble to retrieve his body, while nothing was done in the case of the slain Duarte Guteres;

(c) At any rate, throughout the incident, there were no casualties and the police did not have to take action as the demonstrators dispersed by themselves when they had given voice to their demands.

Concerning the incident in Liquica on 3 and 4 July 1999, I wish to convey to you the following factual account:

(a) On 3 July 1999, a number of pro-integrationists riding on a truck on their way to harvest coffee were ambushed by a group of armed anti-integrationists in Hatorete village. In that ambush, a pro-integrationist, Paul da Costa, was shot dead. Two of his companions, August Sarmentus and Hermenegildo, were also shot and wounded but managed to escape, leaving the body of da Costa behind. The following day, a group of policemen tried to reach the scene of the ambush to retrieve the body of da Costa but they were fired upon before they could arrive at the site. Reinforcements had to be called in. When the policemen finally arrived at the ambush site, the body of da Costa could not be found and the truck had been pushed off the road and dropped from a height to the bottom of the hill;

(b) The following day, on 4 July 1999, at 4 p.m. local time, a group of pro-integrationists physically assaulted a convoy of cars belonging to UNAMET and non-governmental organization volunteers in Liquica. The convoy was on its way back to Dili from a relief operation, distributing food and medicine to internally displaced persons in the village of Sare, Maubara. The physical assault was carried out when the convoy stopped by in Liquica. As a result, several persons in the convoy were injured and the windows of some cars were broken. The Indonesian police soon arrived at the scene and took control of the situation;

(c) In this regard, mention must be made of the fact that some non-governmental organizations had hired vans to deliver food aid without following proper procedures for such missions. They should have secured permission from and established close cooperation and coordination with the relevant local authorities. It was because of their non-compliance with established procedure for such operations that the misunderstanding and allegation arose that the Indonesian Police were not willing to provide them with escort - an allegation firmly denied by the Indonesian Police;

(d) It is also regrettable that UNAMET did not follow up on the advice of the Indonesian Task Force, and as earlier agreed between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-

General, on the need for a joint humanitarian mission involving UNAMET, the Indonesian Task Force and other relevant and competent United Nations agencies to address the problem of internally displaced persons and all its aspects in a comprehensive manner. Instead, UNAMET went ahead in supporting the relief operations of certain non-governmental organizations;

(e) The Indonesian Task Force has also informed UNAMET on the procedures to be followed in such operations, i.e. permission must be secured from the relevant local government authorities and cooperation and coordination must be established with them. Had UNAMET followed the advice of the Indonesian Task Force by securing permission of the competent local authorities and establishing cooperation and coordination with them, the unfortunate incident at Liquica would not have happened;

(f) Furthermore, it was alleged that shots have been fired from the direction of one of the UNAMET cars, wounding two pro-integrationists, Ronaldo Corea and Fernando Ramos. Both are now under treatment at the Wira Husada Hospital in Dili;

(g) It is also highly probable that the incident at Liquica is related to the ambush shooting of a group of pro-integrationists by an anti-integrationist group at Hatorete village as earlier mentioned.

The Indonesian Government condemns the senseless violence in Maliana, the demonstrations in Viqueque, the ambush killing in Hatorete village and the assault against the convoy in Liquica. We condemn all acts of violence related to the popular consultation in East Timor. We are determined to bring the perpetrators to justice regardless of which group they belong to.

I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my Government's commitment to the full implementation in letter and spirit of the New York Agreements on the question of East Timor. Towards this end, the Indonesian Government, the Indonesian National Police and the Armed Forces are determined and committed to ensure that the security situation in East Timor will be conducive to the holding of a free, fair and peaceful popular consultation.

(Signed) Ali ALATAS